The Story of Three Men Stuck in a Cave

Islamic Stories - Volume 33

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Chapter 1: The Tale of the Three Travellers Trapped in a Cave

The Incident: Entrapment by a Great Stone

Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say that three individuals from nations preceding their own once entered a cave to spend the night.

At the mouth of the cave, a large boulder suddenly slipped and sealed the entrance. When morning arrived, they were greatly distressed by their predicament.

They acknowledged that there was no escape from the pressure of the stone except by invoking Allah through their righteous deeds, praying for deliverance from their hardship.

The First Supplicant: Compassion for Aged Parents

The first individual said:

First Traveller:

"O Allah! My parents were very old. I did not want to see them feeding their children or servants the evening milk. One night, while searching for fodder, they fell asleep hungry. I hurried to bring milk and placed it for them, but I preferred not to awaken them. I waited awake all night by their bedside holding the bowl of milk. When they awoke and drank, I performed this act for Your pleasure. If this righteous deed is accepted by You, remove the distress caused by this stone."

Following his prayer, the stone shifted slightly; however, they remained unable to exit the cave.

The Second Supplicant: Loyalty Amidst Hardship

The second individual said:

Second Traveller:

"O Allah! I had a cousin dear to me who faced conspiracies against me but never lost courage. During severe famine, when she came to me for assistance, I provided her with bedding on the condition she entrusted me with authority over her affairs. She consented. When I approached her, she humbly said: 'Fear Allah and do not usurp rights unjustly.' I heeded her advice and withdrew. If this act was performed for Your sake, grant us deliverance from this hardship."

Upon his supplication, the stone moved further, yet the cave’s entrance remained blocked.

The Third Supplicant: Integrity in Labour Compensation

The third individual said:

Third Traveller:

"O Allah! I employed workers and paid their wages, except for one worker whose wage remained unpaid. He refused to receive his due and left. I invested that money in business and it increased. When he returned, I told him that all this was the fruit of his labour and he should take it. He took everything and departed. If I have done this solely for Your pleasure, release us from this predicament."

After this prayer, the stone completely moved aside, and all three emerged joyfully from the cave.